CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1   1.   An apparatus comprising:

2   a display;

3   a first input key; and

4   operating logic associated with the first input key to display on said display

5   one or more emoticons for selection by a user, responsive to a selection of said first

6   input key, when the apparatus is operating in a text mode.

1   2.   The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the first input key is an input key for

2   entering an "*" (asterisk) when the apparatus is operating in a voice mode.

1   3.   The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the first input key is an input key for

2   entering a "#" (pound) when the apparatus is operating in a voice mode.

1   4.   The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the first input key is an input key for

2   entering a digit when the apparatus is operating in a voice mode.

1   5.   The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said apparatus further comprises a 12-key

2   input key pad having 12 input keys arranged in a 4x3 array configuration for entry of

3   at least a selected one of alphabet and numeric data, and said first input key being

4   one of said 12 input keys.

1   6.   The apparatus of claim 5, wherein said first input key is the input key

2   occupying a fourth row and first column position of said 4x3 array configuration.

1   7.   The apparatus of claim 6, wherein column positions of said 4x3 array

2   configuration are determined in a selected one of a left-to-right and a right-to-left

3   manner.

1   8.   The apparatus of claim 6, wherein row positions of said 4x3 array

2   configuration are determined in a selected one of a top-to-bottom and a bottom-to-

3   top manner.

1   9.   The apparatus of claim 1, wherein in addition to said first input key, said

2   apparatus further comprises a 12-key input key pad having 12 input keys arranged

3   in a 4x3 array configuration for entry of at least a selected one of alphabet and

4   numeric data.

1   10.   The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said operating logic is designed to display

2   said emoticons for selection in a selected one of a first left-to-right then top-to-

3   bottom display arrangement, a second right-to-left then top-to-bottom display

4   arrangement, a third top-to-bottom then left-to-right display arrangement, and a

5   fourth top-to-bottom then right-to-left display arrangement.

1   11.   The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said operating logic is designed to place a

2   current focus on one of the one or more emoticons displayed for selection.

1   12.   The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said operating logic is further designed to

2   change said placement of current focus to another one of said one or more

3   emoticons displayed for selection responsive to a user input.

1   13.   The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said operating logic is designed to

2   perform said changes in accordance with the order the one or more emoticons are

3   displayed for selection.

1   14.   The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said first input key is also employed to

2   provide said user input.

1   15.   The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said apparatus further comprises at least

2   one other input key, and said at least one other input key is employed to provide

3   said user input.

1   16.   The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said operating logic is further designed to

2   automatically select the emoticon with the current focus upon occurrence of a

3   selected one of elapse of a predetermined amount of time after the first input key

4   was last selected, and selection another input key.

1   17.   The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said operating logic is further designed to

2   select the emoticon with the current focus, responsive to a user input

1   18.   The apparatus of claim 1, wherein each of said one or more emoticons

2   comprises a plurality of characters.

1 19.   The apparatus of claim 18, wherein said placement of a current focus on a

2 first of displayed emoticons comprises highlighting all characters of the first

3 emoticon.

1 20.   The apparatus of claim 19, wherein said highlighting comprises a selected

2 one of underlying, italicizing and employing bold faces for the characters .

1 21.   The apparatus of claim 18, wherein said selecting of the emoticon with the

2 current focus comprises selecting all characters of the emoticon with the current

3 focus.

1 22.   The apparatus of claim 1, wherein each of said one or more emoticons

2 comprises a pixel map based single graphical symbol.

1 23.   The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said apparatus further comprises:

2   storage medium having stored therein a plurality of programming instructions

3 designed to implement said operating logic; and

4   a processor coupled to the storage medium to execute the programming

5 instruction.

1 24.   The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said apparatus is a communication device.

1 25.   The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said communication device is a wireless

2 mobile phone.

1 26.   The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the apparatus further comprises facilities

2 for adding an emoticon to, or subtracting an emoticon from said one or more

3 emoticons to be displayed for user selection.

1 27.   A communication device comprising:

2   a display;

3   a first input key; and

4   operating logic associated with the first input key to display on said display

5 one or more emoticons for selection by a user, including placing a current focus on a

6 first of the displayed one or more emoticons, responsive to a selection of said first

7 input key, and to automatically select the emoticon having the current focus upon

8 expiration of a predetermined amount of time since the current focus was placed.

1 28.   The communication device of claim 27, wherein the first input key is an input

2 key for entering an "*" (asterisk) when the apparatus is operating in a voice mode.

1 29.   The communication device of claim 27, wherein the first input key is an input

2 key for entering a "#" (pound) when the apparatus is operating in a voice mode.

1 30.   The communication device of claim 27, wherein the first input key is an input

2 key for entering a digit when the apparatus is operating in a voice mode.

1 31.   The communication device of claim 27, wherein said apparatus further

2 comprises a 12-key input key pad having 12 input keys arranged in a 4x3 array

3 configuration for entry of at least a selected one of alphabet and numeric data, and

4 said first input key being one of said 12 input keys.

1 32. The communication device of claim 27, wherein in addition to said first input

2 key, said apparatus further comprises a 12-key input key pad having 12 input keys

3 arranged in a 4x3 array configuration for entry of at least a selected one of alphabet

4 and numeric data.

1 33. The communication device of claim 27, wherein said operating logic is

2 designed to display said one or more emoticons for selection in a selected one of a

3 first left-to-right then top-to-bottom display arrangement, a second right-to-left then

4 top-to-bottom display arrangement, a third top-to-bottom then left-to-right display

5 arrangement, and a fourth top-to-bottom then right-to-left display arrangement.

1 34. The communication device of claim 27, wherein said operating logic is further

2 designed to change said placement of current focus to another one of said one or

3 more emoticons displayed for selection responsive to a user input.

1 35. The communication device of claim 34, wherein said operating logic is

2 designed to perform said changes in accordance with the order the one or more

3 emoticons are displayed for selection.

1 36. The communication device of claim 34, wherein said first input key is also

2 employed to provide said user input.

1 37. The communication device of claim 34, wherein said apparatus further

2 comprises at least one other input key, and said at least one other input key is

3 employed to provide said user input.

1   38.   The communication device of claim 27, wherein each of said one or more

2   emoticons comprises a plurality of characters.

1   39.   The communication device of claim 38, wherein said placement of a current

2   focus on a first of the displayed one or more emoticons comprises highlighting all

3   characters of the first emoticon.

1   40.   The communication device of claim 39, wherein said highlighting comprises a

2   selected one of underlying, italicizing and employing bold faces for the characters .

1   41.   The communication device of claim 27, wherein said selecting of the

2   emoticon with the current focus comprises selecting all characters of the emoticon

3   with the current focus.

1   42.   The communication device of claim 27, wherein each of said one or more

2   emoticons comprises a pixel map based single graphical symbol.

1   43.   The communication device of claim 27, wherein said apparatus further

2   comprises:

3   storage medium having stored therein a plurality of programming instructions

4   designed to implement said operating logic; and

5   a processor coupled to the storage medium to execute the programming

6   instruction.

1 44. The communication device of claim 27, wherein said communication device is

2 a wireless mobile phone.

1 45. A communication device cover comprising:

2   a plurality of input keys including first input key; and

3   storage medium having stored therein a plurality of programming instructions

4 designed to enable a communication device mated with the communication device

5 cover to display on a display of the communication device one or more emoticons for

6 selection responsive to a selection of said first input key.

1 46. The communication device cover of claim 45, wherein said programming

2 instructions further enable the mated communication device to place a current focus

3 on one of the one or more emoticons displayed for selection.

1 47. The communication device cover of claim 45, wherein said programming

2 instructions further enable the mated communication device to change said

3 placement of current focus to another one of said one or more emoticons displayed

4 for selection responsive to a user input.

1 48. The communication device cover of claim 45, wherein said programming

2 instructions further enable the mated communication device to select the emoticon

3 with the current focus, in a selected one of an automatic manner and a responsive to

4 user input manner.

1 49. The communication device cover of claim 45, wherein said storage medium

2 further having stored therein a plurality of emoticons.

1   50.   The communication device cover of claim 45, wherein said storage medium

2   further having stored therein information identifying said first input key.

1   51.   The communication device cover of claim 45, wherein each of said one or

2   more emoticons comprises a plurality of characters.

1   52.   A communication device cover comprising:

2   a plurality of input keys including first input key; and

3   storage medium having stored therein a resource identifier identifying a

4   location where a plurality of programming instructions may be retrieved for a

5   communication device mated with the communication device cover, wherein the

6   programming instructions are designed to enable the mated communication device

7   to display on a display of the communication device one or more emoticons for

8   selection responsive to a selection of said first input key.

1   53.   The communication device cover of claim 52, wherein said programming

2   instructions further enable the mated communication device to place a current focus

3   on one of the one or more emoticons displayed for selection.

1   54.   The communication device cover of claim 52, wherein said programming

2   instructions further enable the mated communication device to change said

3   placement of current focus to another one of said one or more emoticons displayed

4   for selection responsive to a user input.

1   55.   The communication device cover of claim 52, wherein said programming

2   instructions further enable the mated communication device to select the emoticon

3   with the current focus, in a selected one of an automatic manner and a responsive to

4   user input manner

1   56.   The communication device cover of claim 52, wherein said identified location

2   further having stored therein a plurality of emoticons.

1   57.   The communication device cover of claim 52, wherein said identified location

2   further having stored therein information identifying said first input key.

1   58.   The communication device cover of claim 52, wherein each of said one or

2   more emoticons comprises a plurality of characters.

1   59.   A method comprising:

2   displaying one or more emoticons for selection responsive to a selection of an

3   input key;

4   placing a current focus on a first of the displayed one or more emoticons; and

5   automatically selecting the emoticon with the current focus upon elapse of a

6   predetermined amount of time after the current focus was placed.

1   60.   The method of claim 59, wherein the method further comprises moving the

2   current focus to a second of the displayed one or more emoticons responsive to a

3   user input.

1   61.   The method of claim 59, wherein each of said one or more emoticons

2   comprises a plurality of characters.

1   62.   The method of claim 61, wherein said placing of a current focus on a first of

2   the displayed one or more emoticons comprises highlighting all characters of the first

3   emoticon.

1   63.   The method of claim 61, wherein said automatic selection of the emoticon

2   with the current focus comprises automatically selecting all characters of the

3   emoticon with the current focus.

1   64.   The method of claim 63, wherein the method further comprises facilitating

2   editing of the automatically selected characters of the emoticon.